

**Amendments to the Claims**

Please replace the listing of claims as follows:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A printing blanket comprising:

a carrier sleeve layer having at least one axially convex surface, the carrier sleeve layer being rigid to maintain a tubular shape for the printing blanket; and

a print layer disposed over the carrier sleeve layer;

wherein an outer surface of the print layer has a convex axial profile when the blanket is disposed on a blanket cylinder without pressure.

Claim 2 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 1 wherein the carrier sleeve layer is thicker in an axial middle than at axial ends.

Claim 3 (withdrawn): The printing blanket as recited in claim 1 wherein the carrier sleeve layer is of uniform thickness.

Claim 4 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 1 wherein the print layer has a uniform thickness.

Claim 5 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 1 wherein the print layer is gapless and tubular.

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 1 wherein the blanket provides uniform axial print or nip pressure across the width of the blanket.

Claim 8 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 1 further including a compressible layer disposed between the carrier sleeve layer and the print layer.

Claim 9 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 8 further comprising an

inextensible layer disposed over the compressible layer and underneath the print layer.

Claim 10 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 1 wherein the printing blanket has at least two axial image areas.

Claim 11 (original): The printing blanket as recited in claim 10 wherein the printing blanket has at least three axial image areas.

Claim 12 (currently amended): An offset printing press comprising:

an image cylinder;

a blanket cylinder; and

a printing blanket having a carrier sleeve layer being rigid to maintain a tubular shape for the printing blanket and the carrier sleeve layer having at least one axially convex surface and a print layer disposed over the carrier sleeve layer;

wherein an outer surface of the print layer has a convex axial profile when the blanket is disposed on a blanket cylinder without pressure.

Claim 13 (original): The offset printing press as recited in claim 12 wherein the printing press is a lithographic web printing press.

Claim 14 (original): The offset printing press as recited in claim 12 wherein the image cylinder has at least two axial image areas.

Claims 15 to 20 (canceled).

Claim 21 (previously presented): A printing blanket comprising:

a carrier sleeve layer having at least one axially convex surface; and

a print layer disposed over the carrier sleeve layer;

wherein an outer surface of the print layer has a convex axial profile when the blanket is disposed on a blanket cylinder without pressure.

Claims 22 and 23 (canceled).

Claim 24 (currently amended):     A printing blanket comprising:  
                                  a carrier sleeve layer having at least one axially convex surface, the carrier sleeve layer  
being rigid to maintain a tubular shape for the printing blanket; and  
                                  a print layer disposed over the carrier sleeve layer ~~The printing blanket as recited in claim~~  
± wherein the carrier sleeve layer is made of fiberglass.

Claim 25 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 wherein the carrier sleeve layer is thicker in an axial middle than at axial ends.

Claim 26 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 wherein the carrier sleeve layer is of uniform thickness.

Claim 27 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 wherein the print layer has a uniform thickness.

Claim 28 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 wherein the print layer is gapless and tubular.

Claim 29 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 wherein the blanket provides uniform axial print or nip pressure across the width of the blanket.

Claim 30 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 further including a compressible layer disposed between the carrier sleeve layer and the print layer.

Claim 31 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 30 further comprising an inextensible layer disposed over the compressible layer and underneath the print layer.

Claim 32 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 wherein the printing blanket has at least two axial image areas.

Claim 33 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 32 wherein the printing blanket has at least three axial image areas.

Claim 34 (new):       The printing blanket as recited in claim 21 wherein the carrier sleeve layer is made of fiberglass.